CLAIM AMMENDMENTS

Please amend the Claims as follows. (The following Claim Listing replaces all claims presented heretofore.)

Claims 1-36 (cancelled).

Claim 37 (currently amended). A computer implemented method that provides ~~of providing~~ a clearinghouse for the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain comprising a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user, and including one or more individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user, the method comprising:

    providing one or more computers to:

    pay[[ing]] the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

    pay[[ing]] each individual supply chain participant[[s]] ~~between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for~~ a payment covering one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by ~~each~~ such individual supply chain participant, said payment excluding any payment previously made to the most-upstream node supply chain participant and to any individual supply chain participant that is more upstream than such individual supply chain participant.

(Continued on next page.)

Claim 38 (currently amended).   The method of claim 37, and ~~wherein the clearinghouse retains ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain, the method~~ further comprising:

the clearinghouse retains ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain; and

the one or more computers further:

transferring ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user; and

invoice ~~invoicing~~ the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon transferring ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user.

Claim 39 (currently amended). The method of claim 37, and ~~wherein~~:

each supply chain participant transfers ownership of the goods as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant to the end user; and

the payment to ~~paying of~~ each individual supply chain participant[[s]] occurs upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participant[[s]].

Claim 40 (currently amended). The method of claim 39, the payment to each ~~and wherein the paying of~~ individual supply chain participant[[s]] is via payment to a restricted account[[s]] that allow only use of the payment[[s]] for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by such ~~the~~ individual supply chain participant[[s]].

Claim 41 (currently amended). The method of claim 37, ~~and~~ the one or more computers further to ~~comprising~~ pass[[ing]] orders for the goods from the end user to each supply chain participant via the clearinghouse.

Claim 42 (currently amended). The method of claim 37, ~~and wherein~~ further comprising orders for the goods that are passed along the supply chain from one ~~from one~~ supply chain participant to another, beginning with the end user and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant.

Claim 43 (currently amended). A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein ~~configured~~ to cause a computer system to perform the steps of:

provide a financial clearinghouse for the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain identified by a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user, and including one or more individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user:

pay the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

pay each individual supply chain participant[[s]] ~~between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for~~ a payment covering one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by such individual supply chain participant[[s]], said payment excluding any payment previously made to the most-upstream node supply chain participant and to any individual supply chain participant that is more upstream than such individual supply chain participant.

Claim 44 (currently amended).   The computer-usable medium of claim 43, ~~and wherein~~ the computer-readable program code ~~is~~ further ~~configured~~ to:

cause the clearinghouse to retain ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain;

transfer ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user; and

invoice the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon the transfer of ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user.

Claim 45 (currently amended).   The computer-usable medium of claim 43, and wherein:

each supply chain participant transfers ownership of the goods to the next supply chain participant as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant to the end user; and

the computer-readable program code ~~is further configured to perform the step of paying~~ _pays each_ individual supply chain participant[[s]] upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participant[[s]].

Claim 46 (currently amended).   The computer-usable medium of claim 45 ~~and wherein the computer-usable medium is further configured~~ to make _the_ payment[[s]] to _each_ ~~the~~ individual supply chain participant[[s]] via ~~payment to a~~ _restricted_ account[[s]] that allow only use of the payment[[s]] for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by _such_ ~~the~~ individual supply chain participant[[s]].

Claim 47 (currently amended). The computer-usable medium of claim 43 ~~and wherein the computer-usable medium is further configured~~ to pass orders for the goods from the end user to each supply chain participant via the clearinghouse.

Claim 48 (currently amended). The computer-usable medium of claim 43 ~~and wherein the computer-usable medium is further configured~~ to allow orders for the goods to be passed along the supply chain from one from one supply chain participant to another, beginning with the end user and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant.

Claim 49 (currently amended). A networked computer system to coordinate the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain identified by a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user, <u>and including one or more individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user,</u> the system comprising:

a financial clearinghouse computer:

a plurality of serial supply chain computers, each such serial supply chain computer being associated with one of each such supply chain participants;

~~and wherein~~ the financial clearinghouse computer ~~is configured to~~ pay<u>s</u>, via the serial supply chain computers:

the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

<u>each</u> individual supply chain participant[[s]] ~~between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for~~ <u>a payment</u>

covering one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by such individual supply chain participant[[s]], said payment excluding any payment previously made to the most-upstream node supply chain participant and to any individual supply chain participant that is more upstream than such individual supply chain participant.

Claim 50 (currently amended).   The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein the financial clearinghouse computer is further configured to:

cause the clearinghouse computer to retain ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain;

transfer ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse computer to an[[d]] end user computer; and

invoice the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon the transfer of ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse computer to the end user computer.

Claim 51 (currently amended).   The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein:

each supply chain participant computer transfers ownership of the goods to the next supply chain participant as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant computer to the end user computer; and

the clearinghouse computer is further configured to pays each individual supply chain participant[[s]] between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for one or more of value-added costs or logistic services

added by such individual supply chain participant[[s]] upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participant[[s]], and via the respective supply chain participant computer[[s]].

Claim 52 (currently amended). The networked computer system of claim 51, and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to make the payment[[s]] to the respective individual supply chain participant computer[[s]] via payment to a restricted account[[s]] that allow only use of the payment[[s]] for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by such the individual supply chain participant[[s]].

Claim 53 (currently amended). The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to pass orders for the goods from the end user computer to each supply chain participant computer.

Claim 54 (currently amended). The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to allow orders for the goods to be passed along the supply chain from one from one supply chain participant computer to another, beginning with the end user computer and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant computer.

(End of Claims Listing.)